

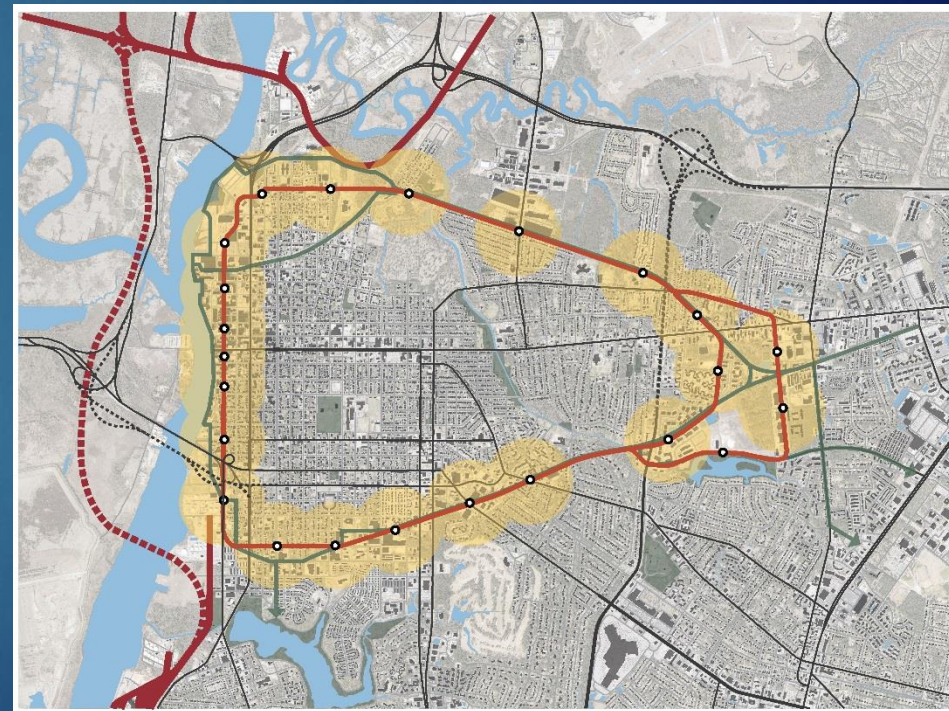
Improving the Rail, Transforming Greater Wilmington

AN ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

WRAR

Government Affairs Committee
October 7, 2015

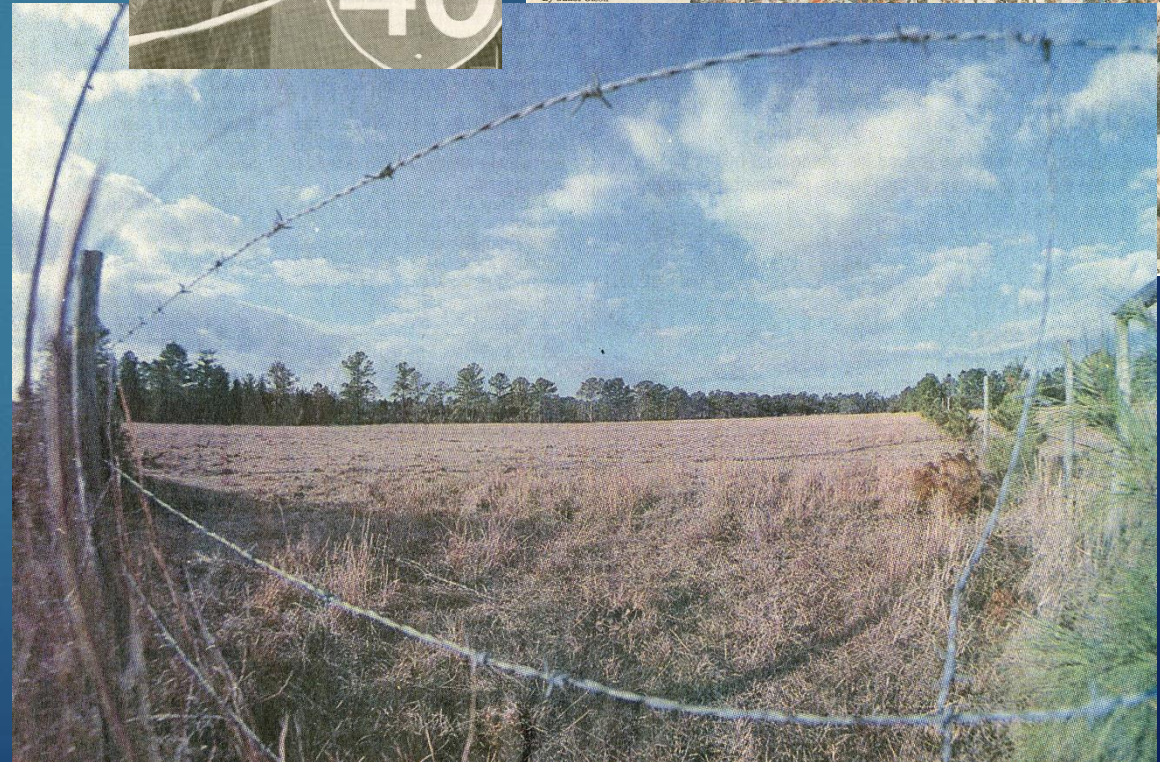
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Time passes quickly.

1990 doesn't seem that long ago. But consider how much things have changed in just 25 years. In 1990:

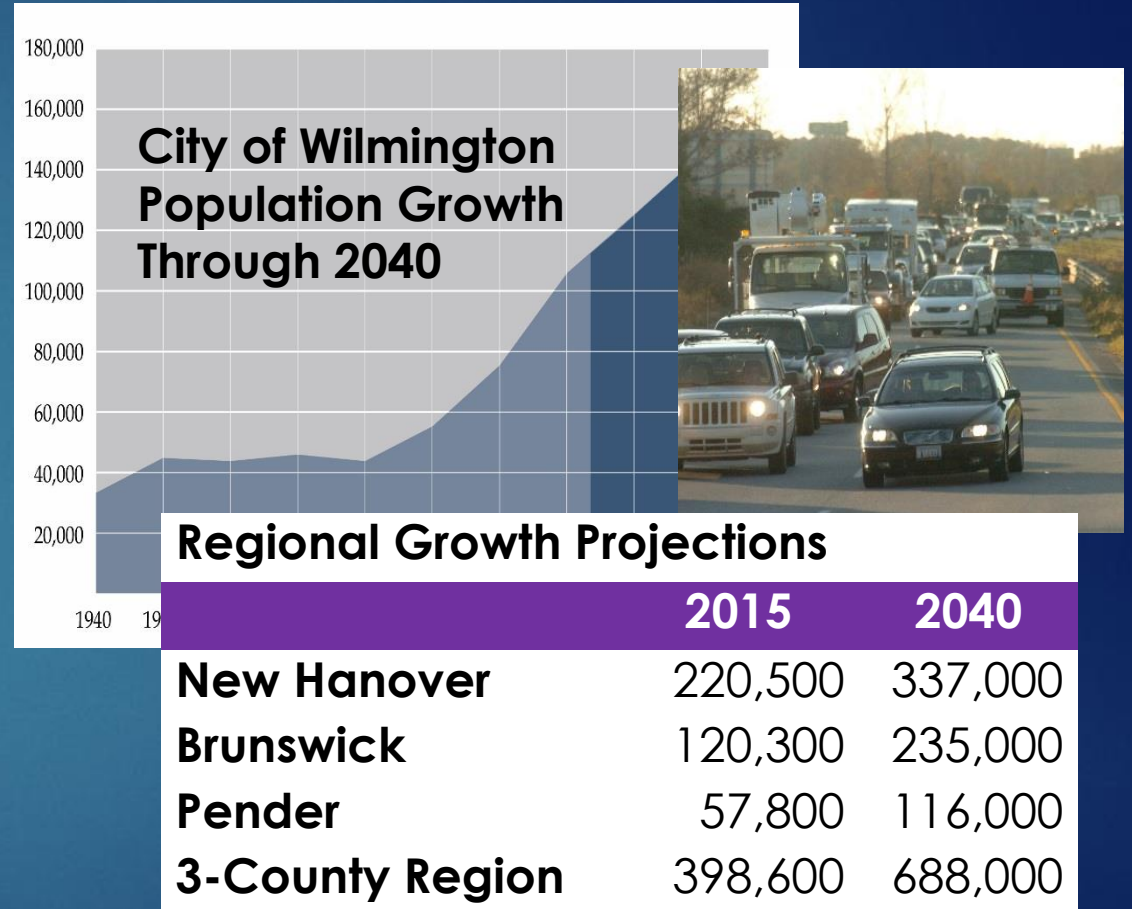
- ▶ I-40 to Wilmington had just opened.
- ▶ Hardy Parker Farm was not to become Mayfaire for another 14 years.
- ▶ Traffic flowed freely over the Memorial Lift Bridge—pretty much any time of day.
- ▶ PPD had just incorporated in North Carolina.
- ▶ New Hanover County had about 140,000 people. (Today 220,000)



2040 will be here before we know it.

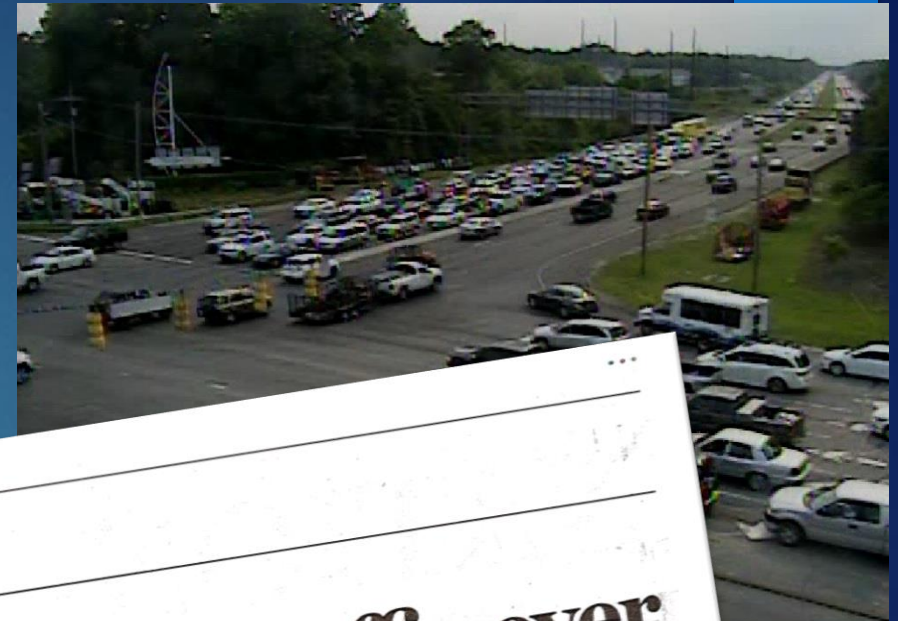
Consider how things might change in the next 25 years:

- ▶ Wilmington: 55,000 more people.
3-County Region: About 300,000 more.
- ▶ Where will that many people find housing?
How will they move about the region?
- ▶ How can the City and the region accommodate growth without traffic grinding to a halt?
- ▶ What is the most strategic use of capital for dealing with the coming growth?



Continuing on our current path presents challenges.

- ▶ Today's traffic conditions. If we don't set a new course, these challenges could overwhelm our ability to grow.

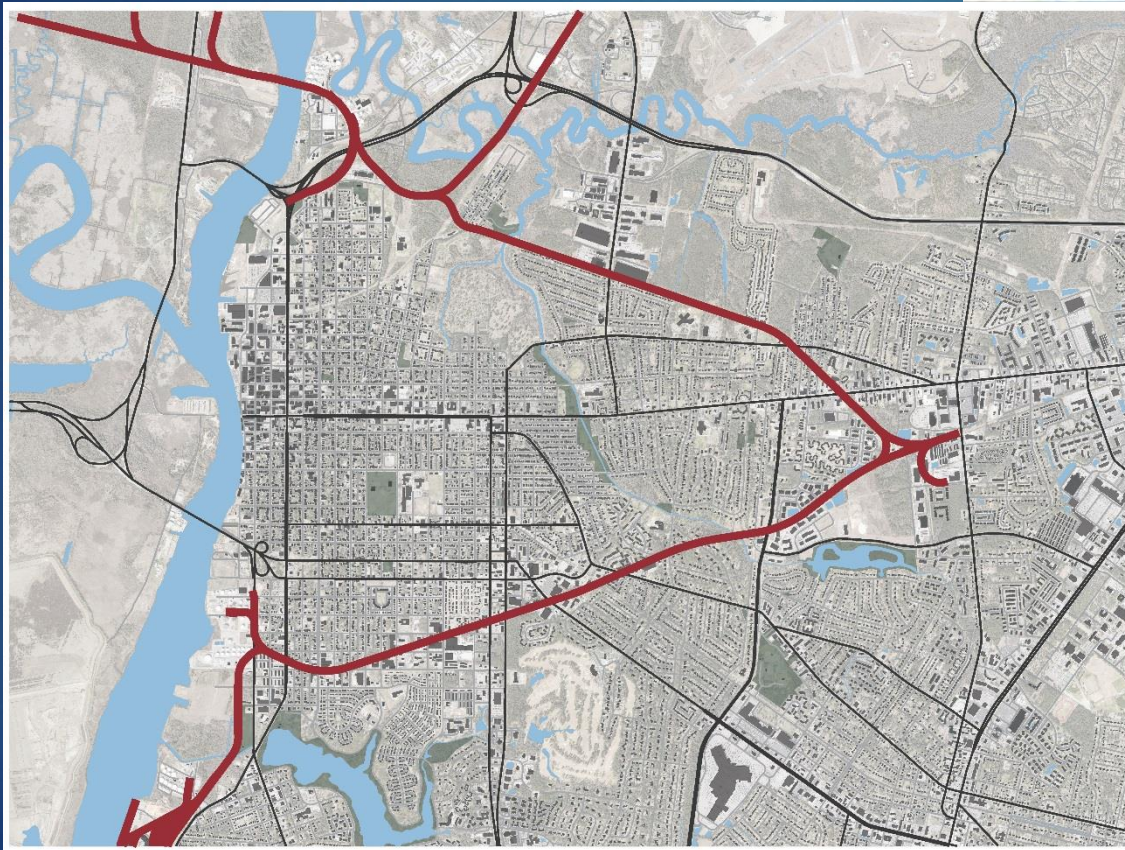


So why this initiative? To explore the possibilities...

1. Regional economic development.
2. Improved rail service to port.
3. Accommodating future growth without gridlock.
4. Transforming Wilmington and SENC.
5. Using taxpayer dollars most effectively.



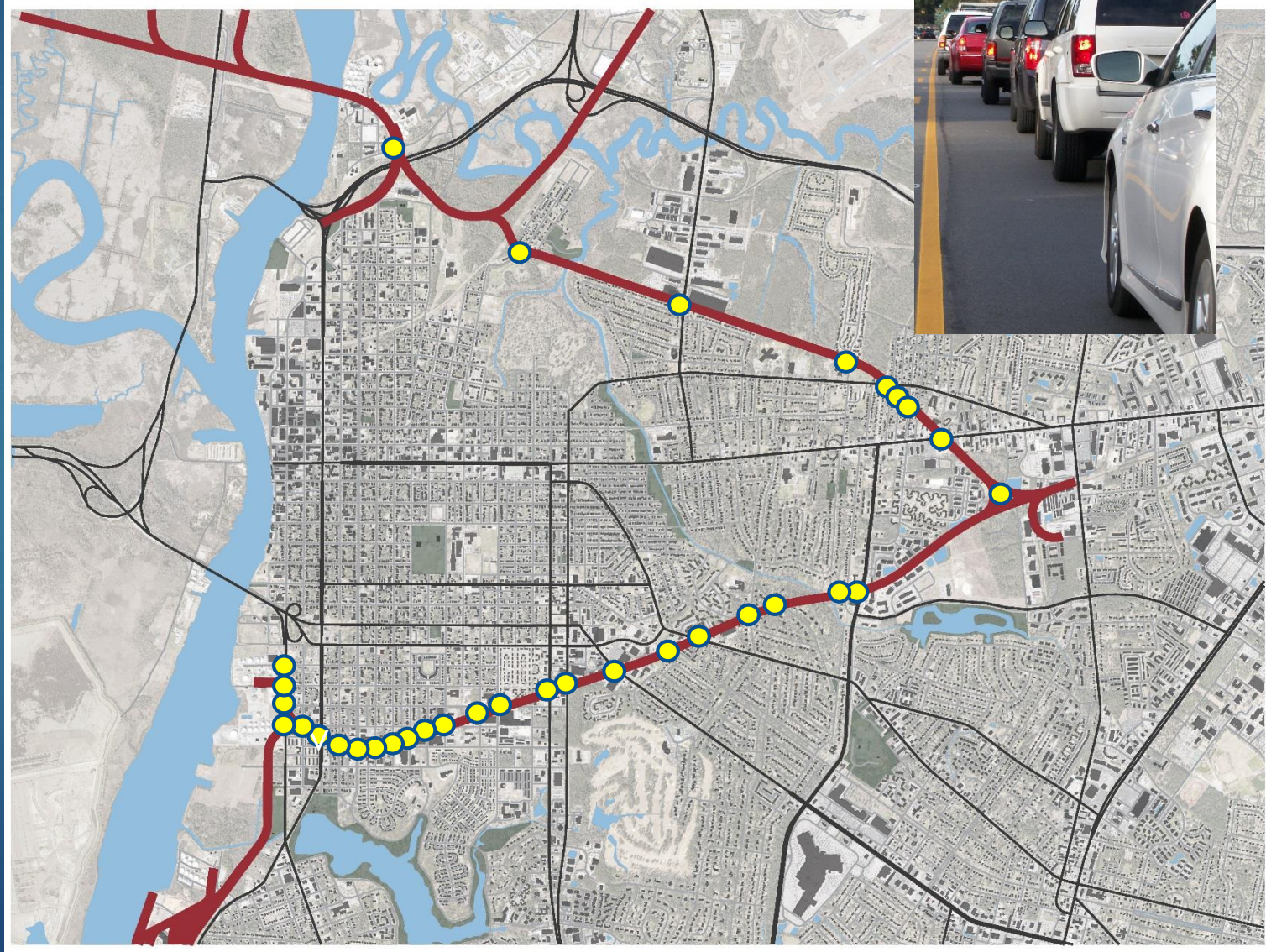
Context:



An Old Train
Route, No
Longer
Relevant

Why No Longer Relevant

- ▶ Path of the rail line forms a large “V”
- ▶ At one time the line wrapped around the city.
- ▶ Freight trains in the heart of Wilmington
- ▶ 32 street crossings...
- ▶ No less than 180,000 vehicle crossings daily



A Good Challenge: Port Business Up

- ▶ Ports 5-year plan to double cargo and container volumes
- ▶ Wood pellet export facility to add 3 or more trains per week
- ▶ Vertex to ship 8,000 rail cars annually—2 to 3 trains weekly

= IMPROVING OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY



A Not So Good Challenge: Community Impacts

- ▶ Safety issues, derailments, liability
- ▶ Horn blasts at 30+ crossings
- ▶ Trains sound off during sleeping hours.
- ▶ Quiet zones not feasible: $\geq \$250,000$ per crossing



Love Grove

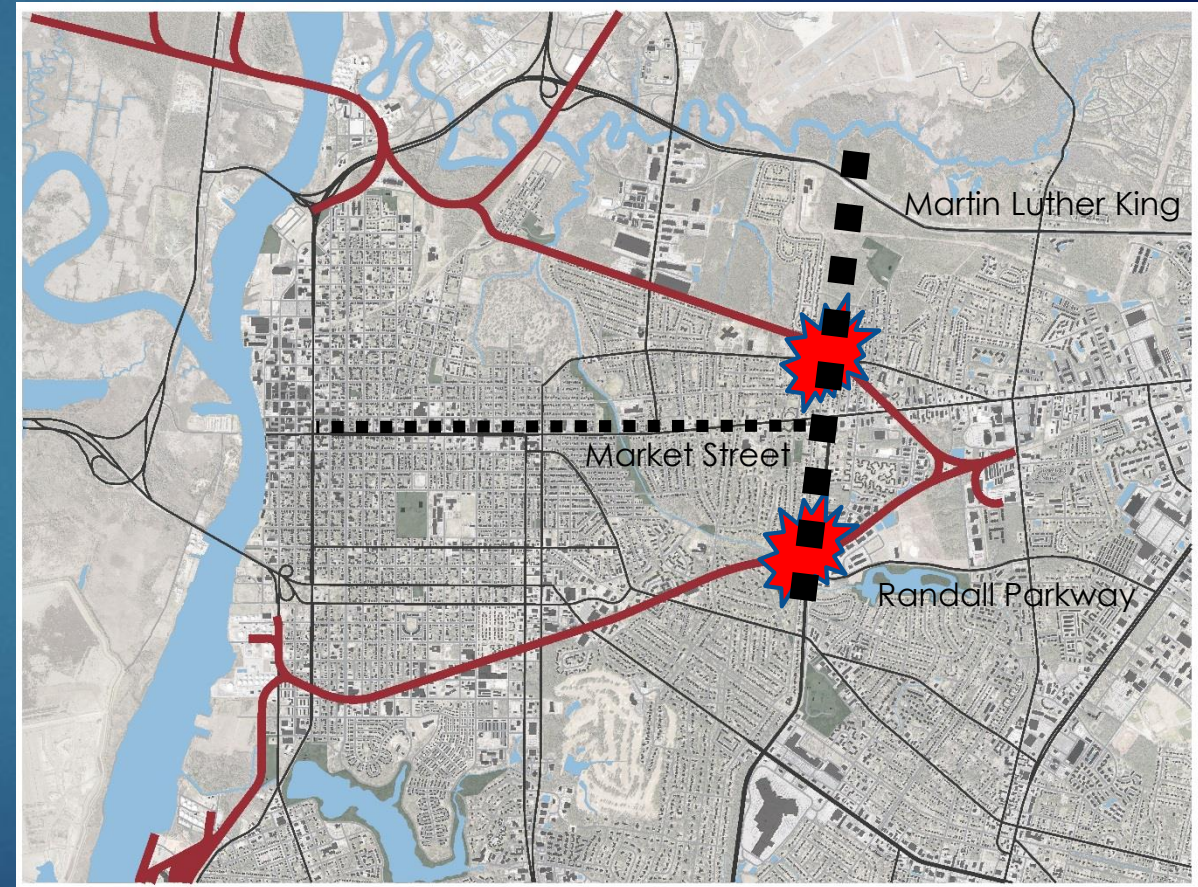


Oleander Drive

A Costly Challenge: Rail-Driven Road Design

E.G. INDEPENDENCE BLVD. EXTENSION

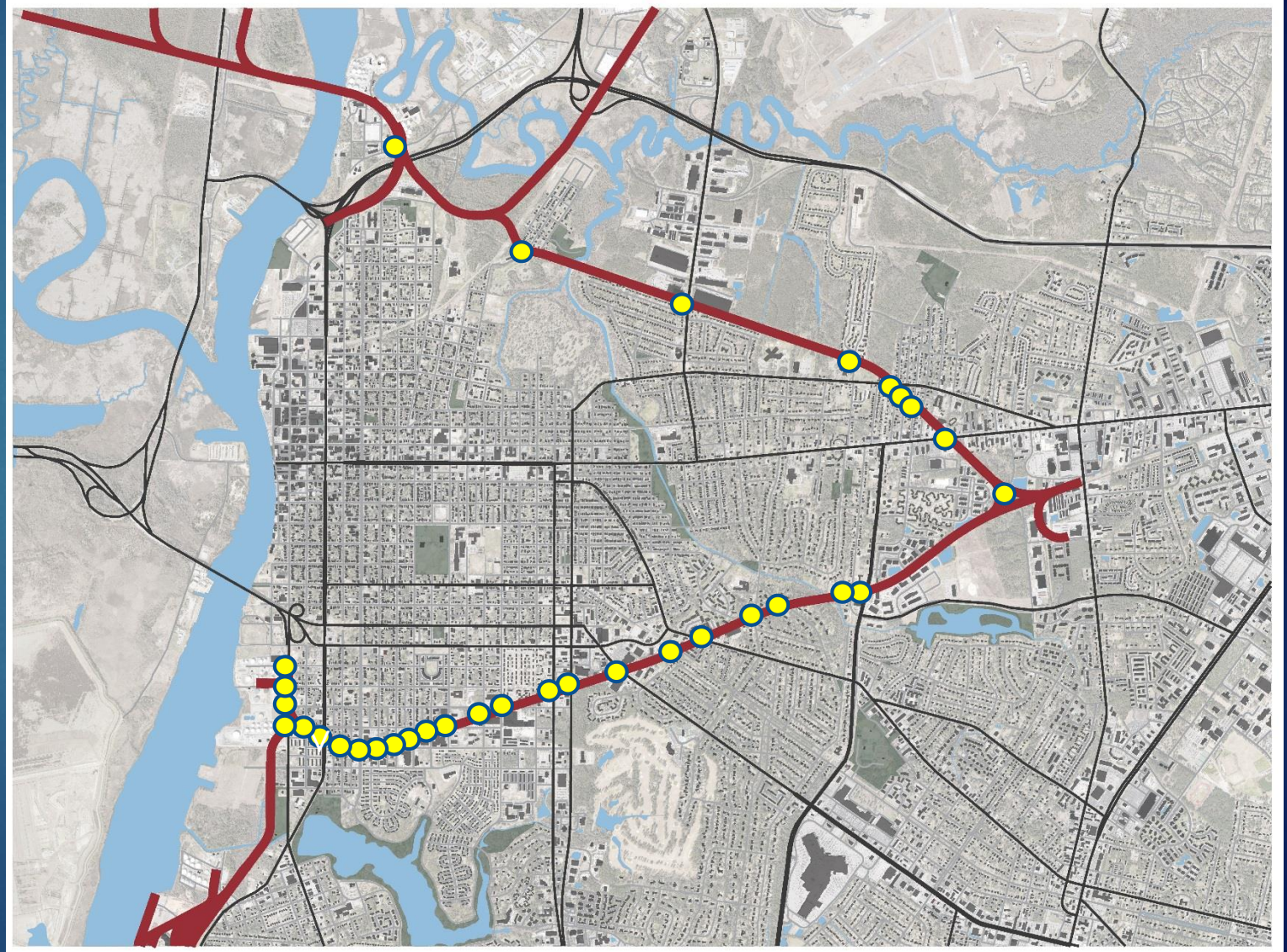
- ▶ Must be elevated over two rail crossings.
- ▶ Estimated \$75 million more to elevate over the rail.
- ▶ City Council supports the need but not the impact of the elevated design.
- ▶ Implementation of Market Street diet is also tied to the Extension.



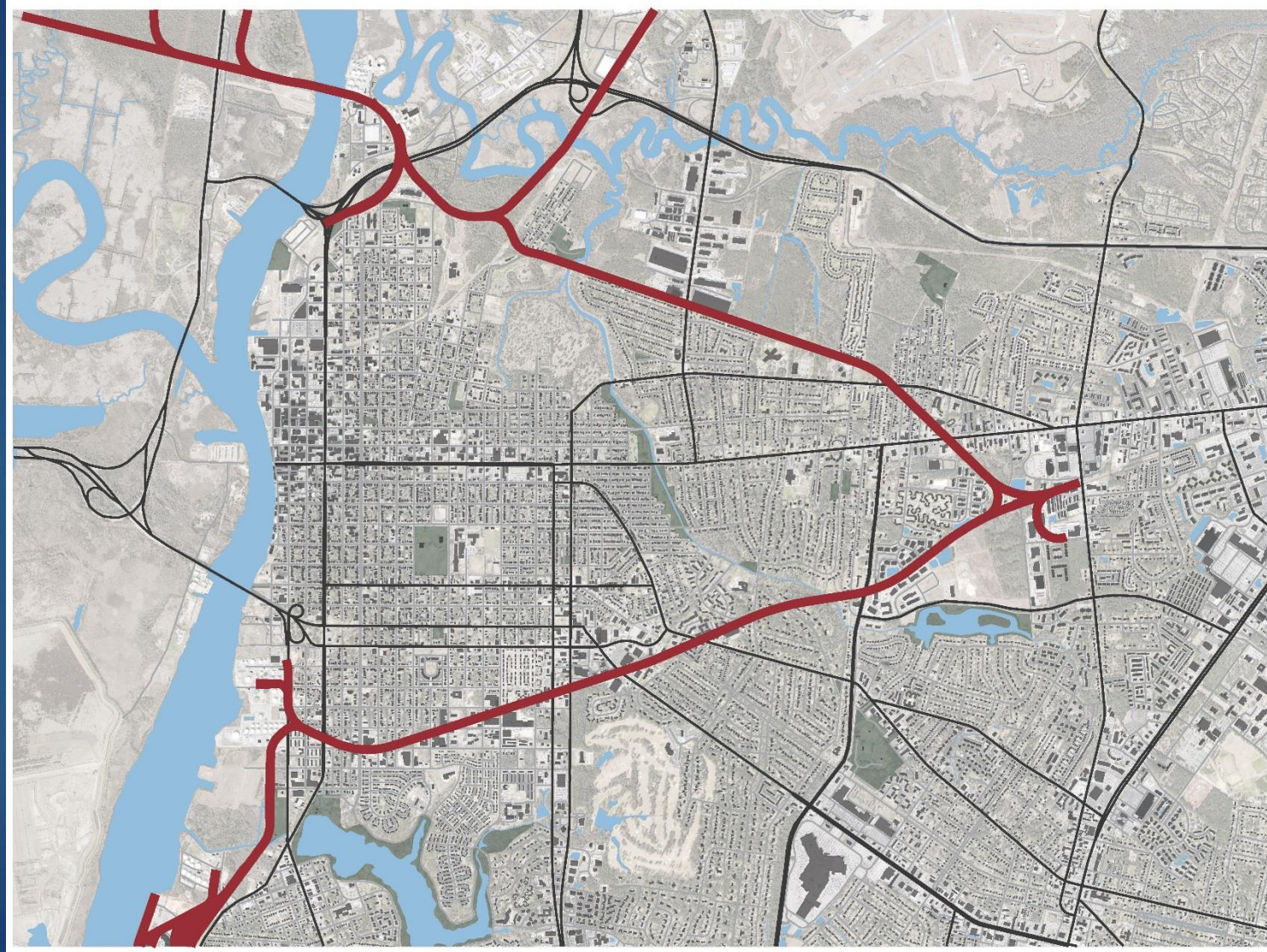
Another Challenge: The “Last Mile”



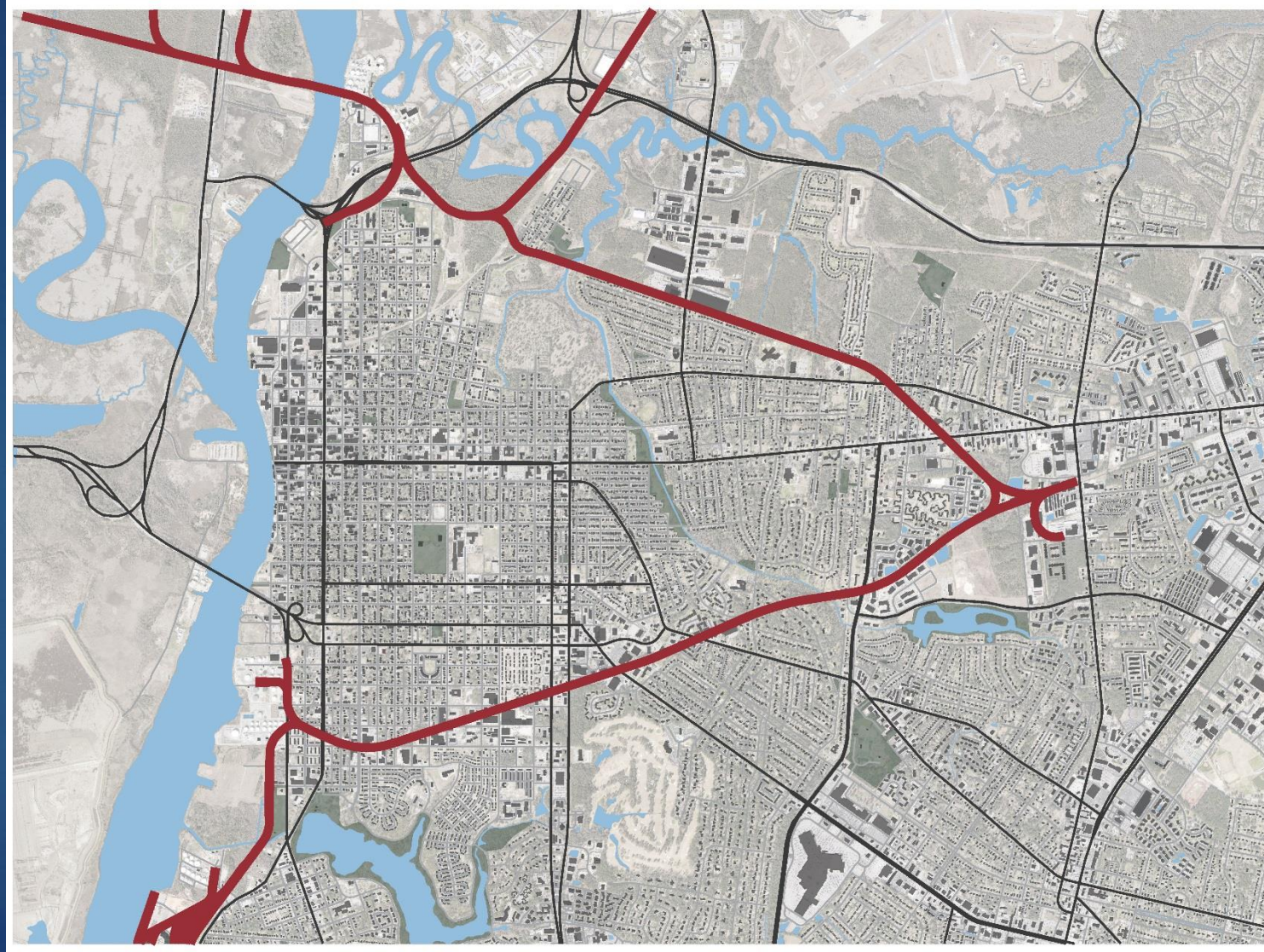
- ▶ Least efficient portion of rail shipment
- ▶ Up to 28% of total cost to move goods
- ▶ Track conflicts with and adds to urban congestion



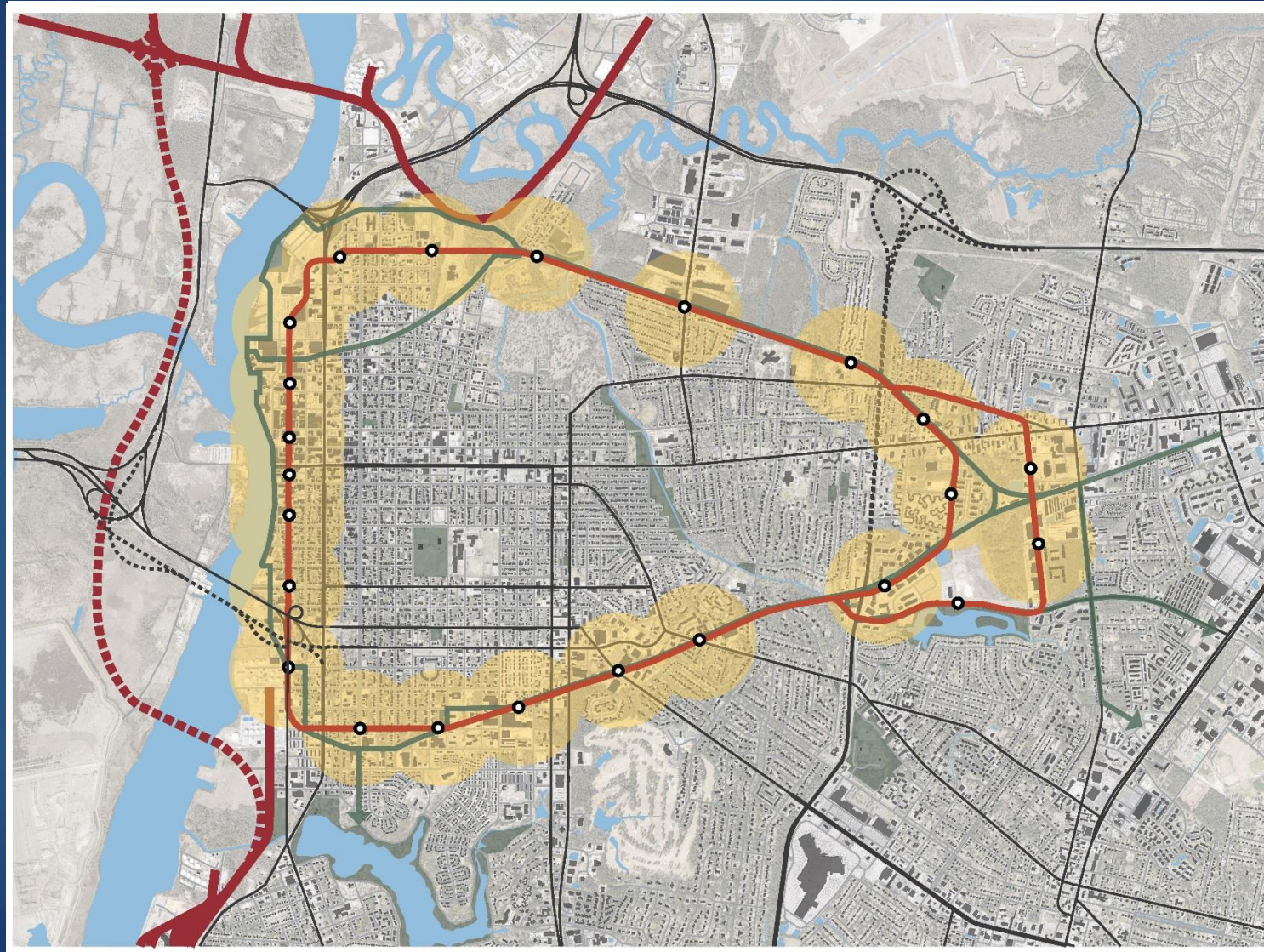
So here we are today....



And tomorrow, after the rail is moved...



And the trolley added...



Benefits

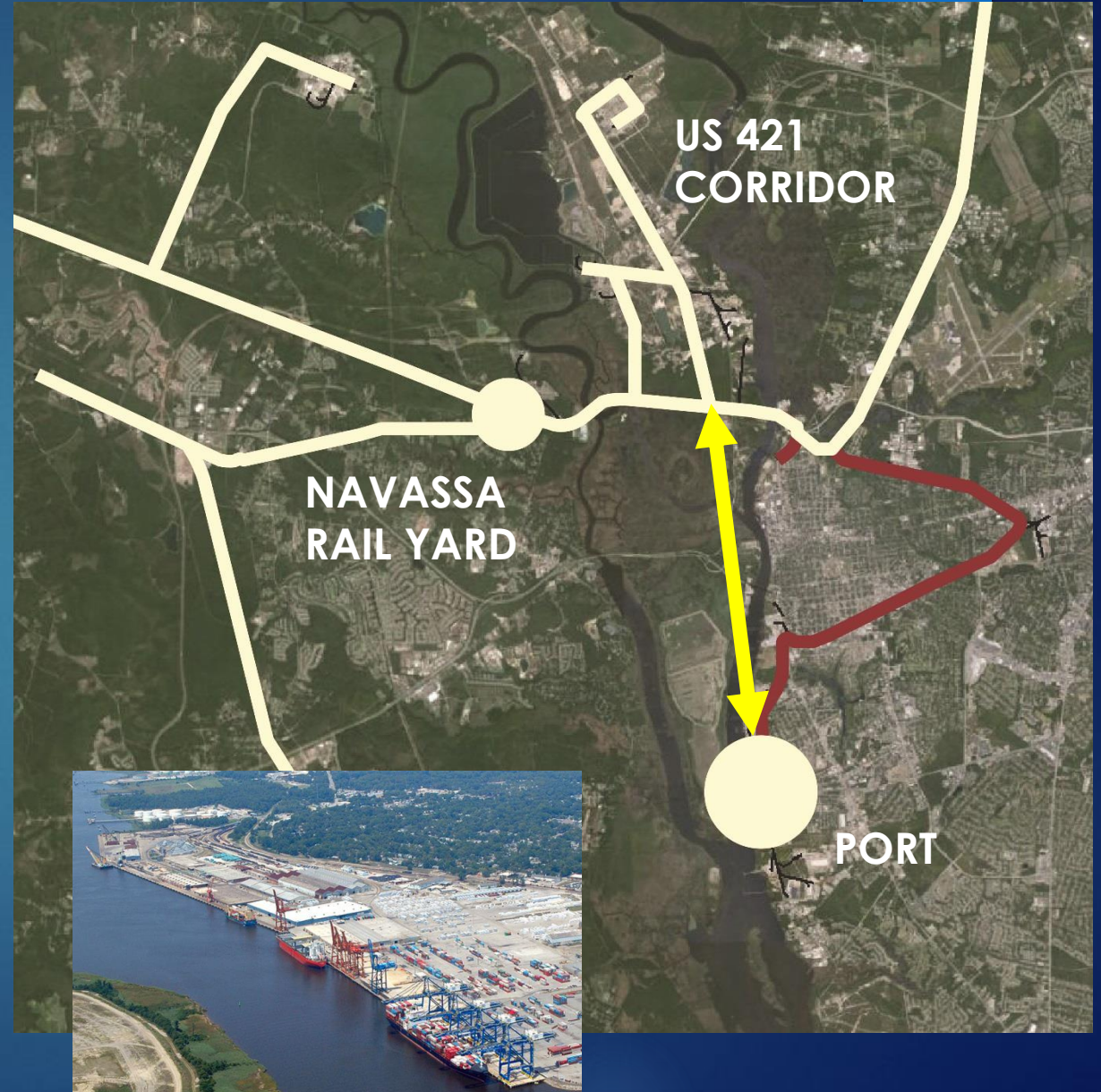


Benefits for Freight Rail

- ▶ Reduced liability/crossing conflicts.
- ▶ No costly crossing maintenance.
- ▶ Direct access to Port.
- ▶ Eliminates “last mile” problem.
- ▶ New tracks handle heavy hopper cars and double stack trains.
- ▶ No human settlements anywhere near the track—complaints stop.

Benefits for Regional Economic Development

- ▶ Wilmington port more competitive nationally.
- ▶ Growth in port volumes more easily accommodated.
- ▶ Adds direct rail service to U.S. 421, leveraging water and sewer investments.



Benefits for Community Development

- ▶ Southside commercial and residential development
- ▶ No more freight trains and horns through the heart of the urban area.
- ▶ Reduces truck traffic in or near neighborhoods
- ▶ Trolley service allows for affordable, accessible housing



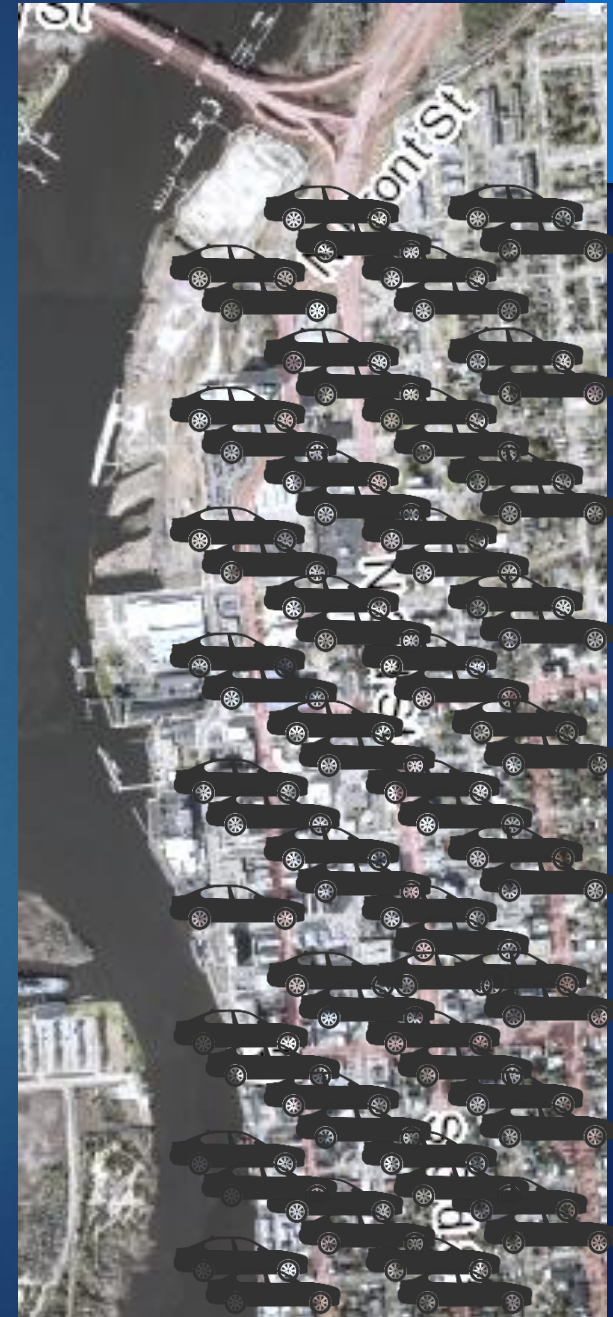
Benefits for Downtown Investment vs Parking Lots and Decks

Question: What do all of the following have in common?:

- ▶ 10,000+ employees downtown & growing
- ▶ 7,500 CFCC students & growing
- ▶ 5,000 visitors, conventioners & growing
- ▶ 1000's of new housing units & residents coming
- ▶ Several new hotels, many restaurants, retail returning
- ▶ New Performing Arts Center
- ▶ Major events at new city park and Pier 33

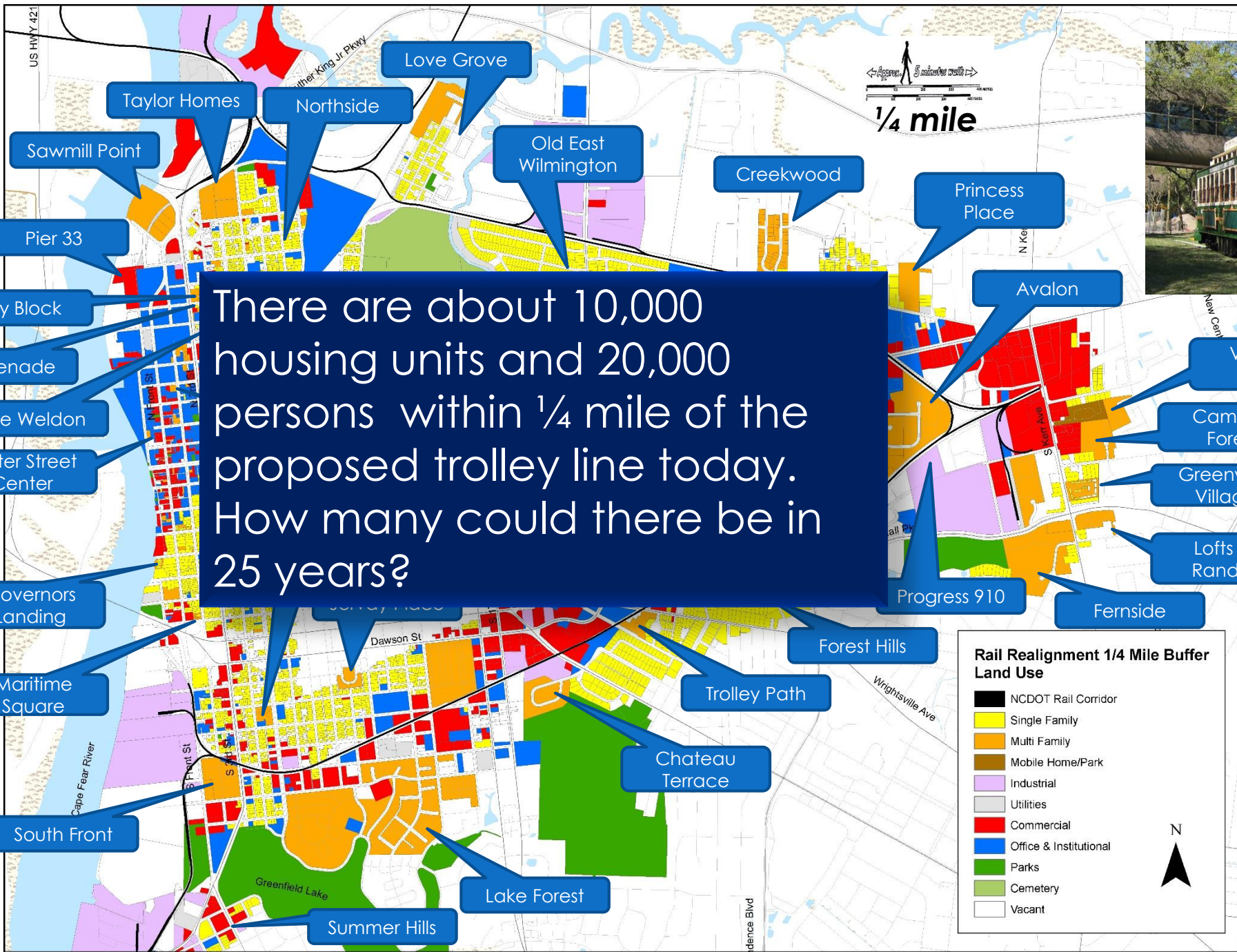
How many \$ millions to be spent on parking needs?

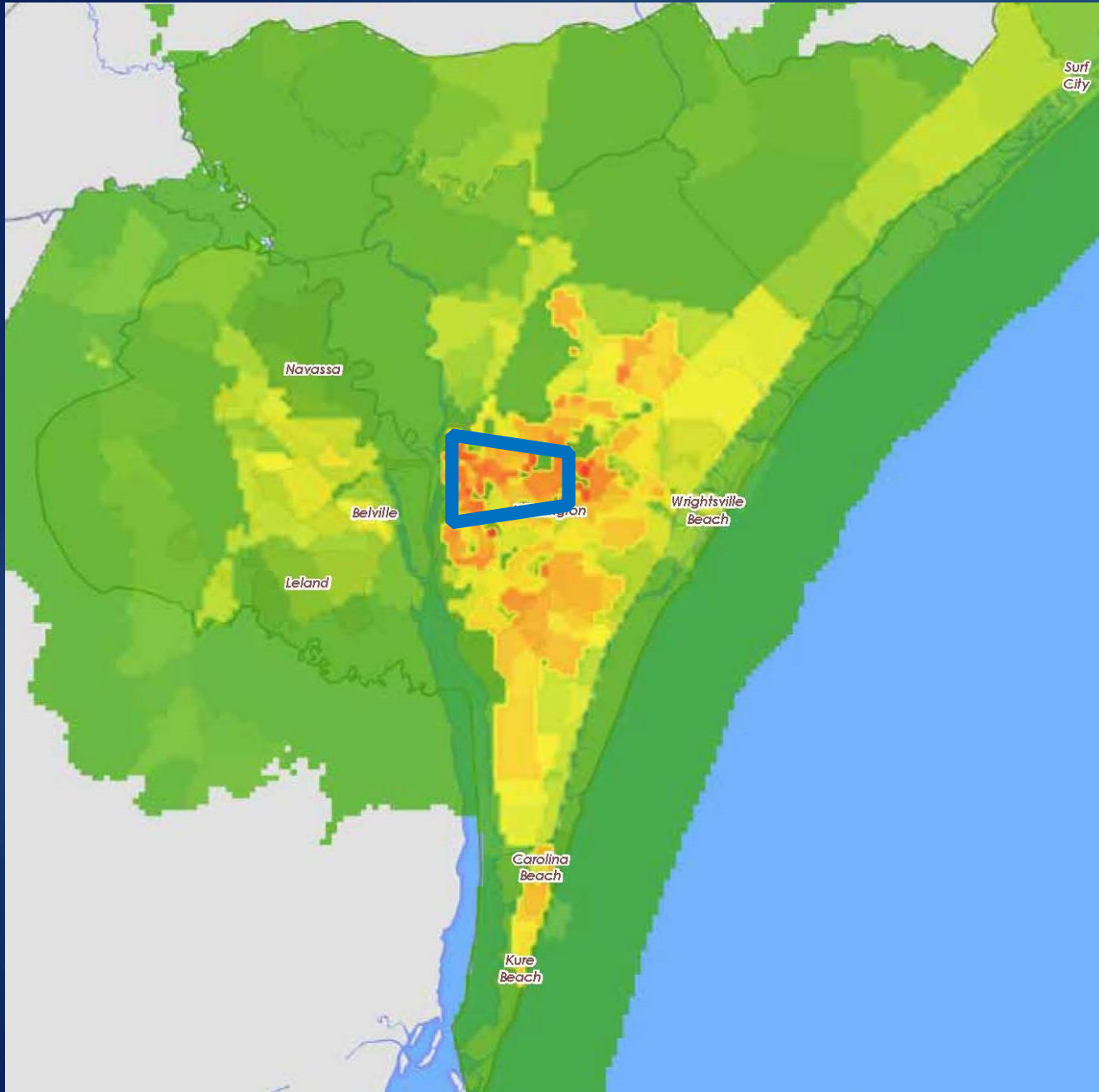
What's the relative R.O.I.?





The Flip Side:
Who would ride the trolley?





Population Density 2010 ...and the Trolley

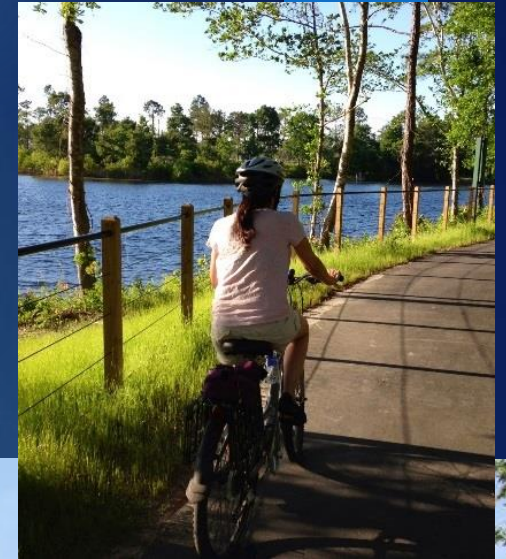
Benefits: So who would ride the trolley?

- ▶ Bankers
- ▶ Maids
- ▶ Lawyers
- ▶ Waiters
- ▶ Students
- ▶ Business owners
- ▶ Concert goers...
- ▶ Those who would not ride a bus, will ride a trolley.



Benefits for Regional Transportation

- ▶ No more rail -traffic tie ups
- ▶ 10+ mile parallel greenway
- ▶ Well located trolley line
- ▶ Passenger rail compatibility
- ▶ Shift to rail from trucks saves roads and lift bridge capacity
- ▶ Independence Blvd and Market Street road diet made feasible
- ▶ 20,000+ employees, students, visitors could come downtown w/out cars



Rail-Related Use of Taxpayer Dollars

Examples:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ▶ Love Grove Second Access | Already Committed | \$6,700,000 |
| ▶ Down payment on street closings and “improvements” | | \$10,900,000 |
| ▶ Independence Blvd Extension (if elevated over rail) | | \$75,000,000 more |
| ▶ Quiet Zones @ \$250+ K per crossing | | (Millions) |
| ▶ Perpetual maintenance of dozens of street/rail crossings | | (???????) |

Support From and For the Governor's 25-Year Vision

- ▶ *“Improve rail connections between military bases and ports.”*
- ▶ *“Develop intermodal train service at the Port of Wilmington.”*



Governor's 25-Year Vision Continued

- ▶ *“Develop economically competitive rail service to inland ports”*
- ▶ *“Improve rail-seaport connections to I-95 to serve eastern US rail freight”*



Governor's 25-Year Vision Continued



Savannah

- ▶ In 1925, Wilmington and New Hanover County had 22 miles of trolley lines with 1/6 of today's population.



New Orleans



- ▶ *“Expand mass transit options in high growth areas, including rail”*

Governor's 25-Year Vision Continued

- ▶ *“Expand access to passenger rail options in all regions of the state.”*



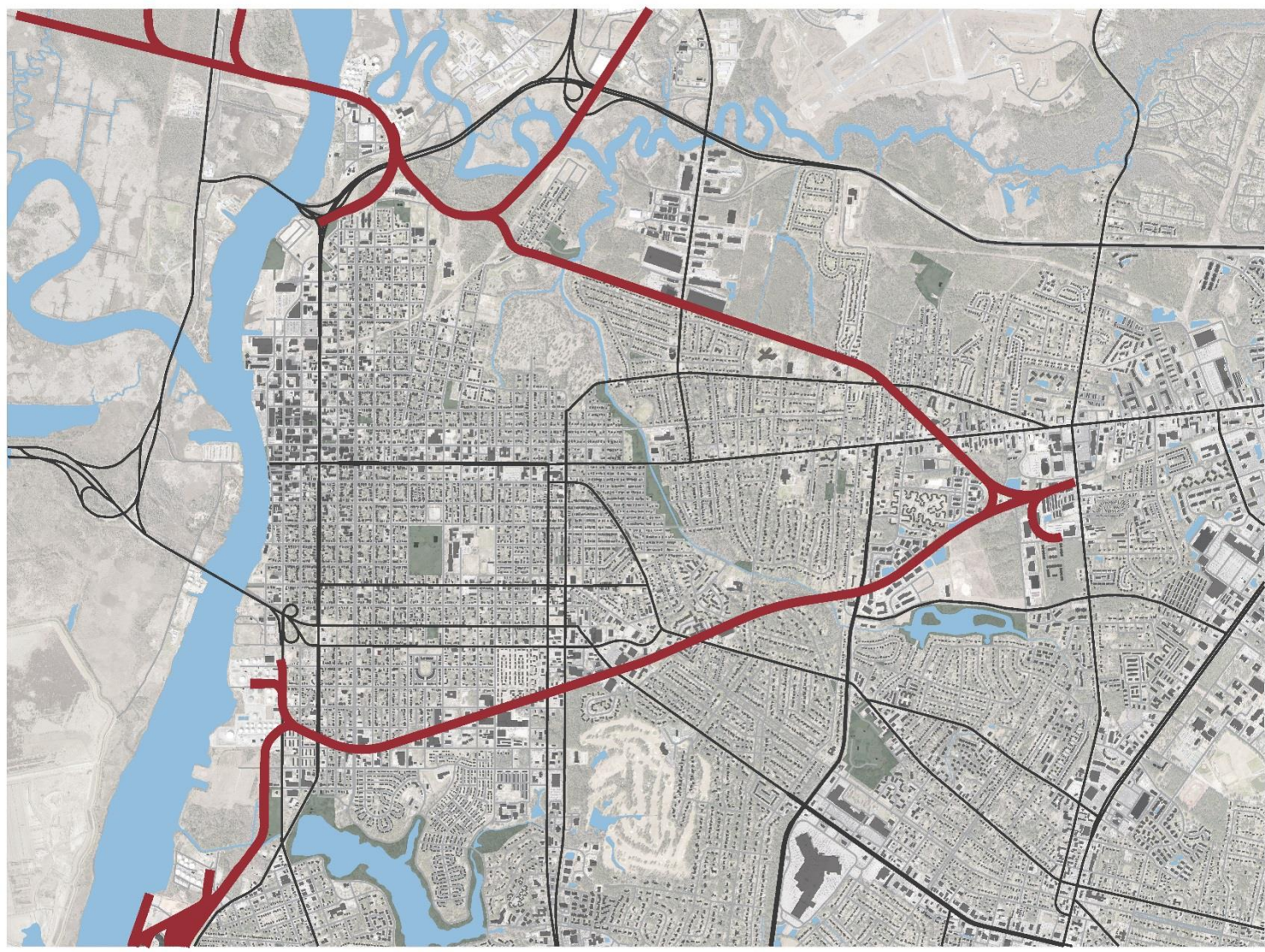
Those with reasons to support...



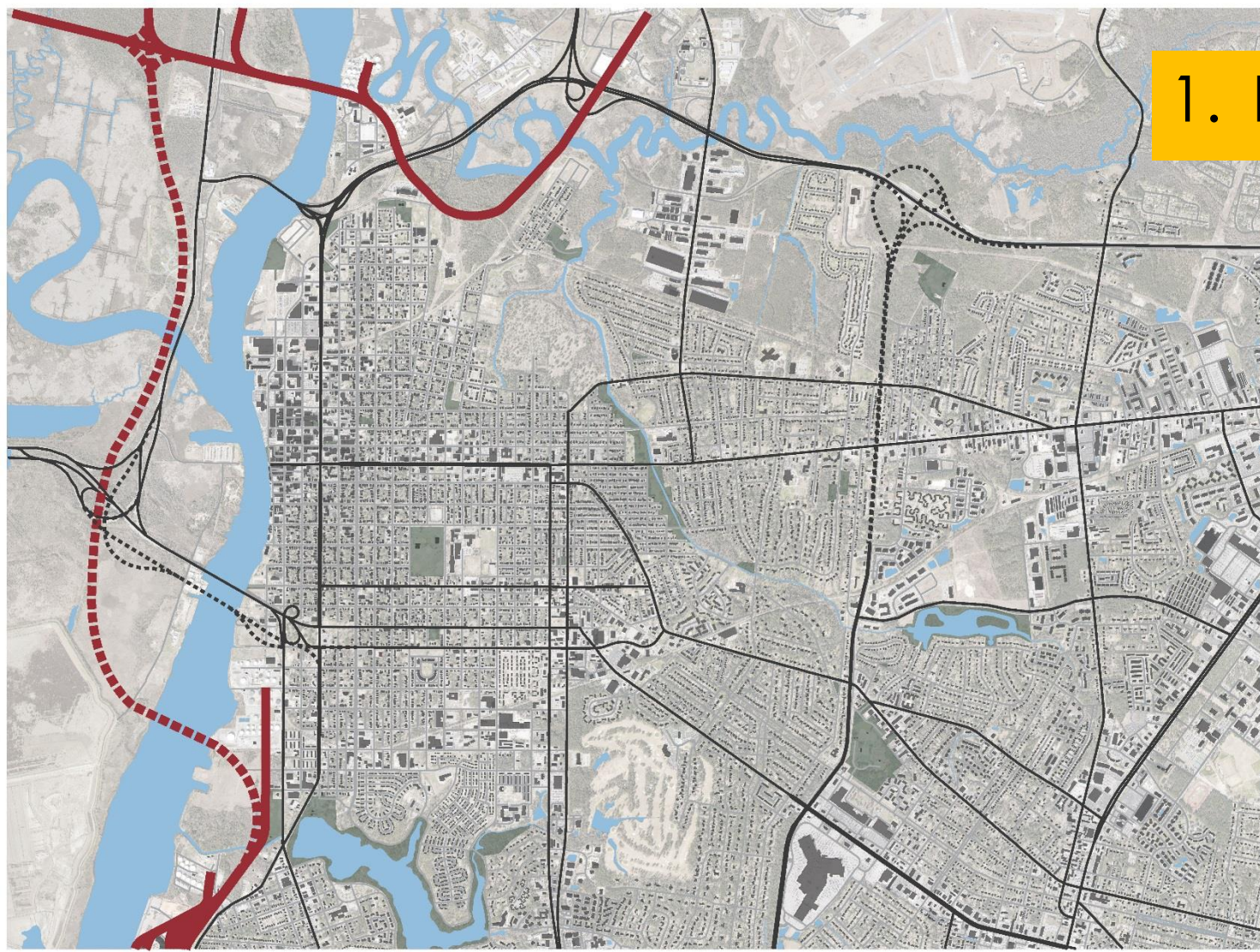
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|-------------------------|--|
| ▶ US Dept of Defense | Secure, rapid response deployment |
| ▶ NC Gen Assembly | Statewide economic development |
| ▶ Governor of NC | Implementation of Transportation Vision |
| ▶ NC State Ports | Competiveness & revenues |
| ▶ NC Rail Division | Improved rail access plan to Port |
| ▶ CSX/Wilm Term Rail | Less liability/lower cost/ greater profits |
| ▶ Emerging Industries | Efficient transportation services |
| ▶ Fed Transit Admin | Pilot/demonstration project |
| ▶ Wilmington & NHC | Econ develop/tax base/infrastructure |
| ▶ Bruns,Leland,Belville | Congestion relief to bridge |
| ▶ Neighborhoods | Quality of Life/Trolley Service |
| ▶ Housing Advocates | Greater buying power from trans savings |
| ▶ Environ Advocates | Air & water quality benefits |

Summing Up

Easy as 1, 2, 3.

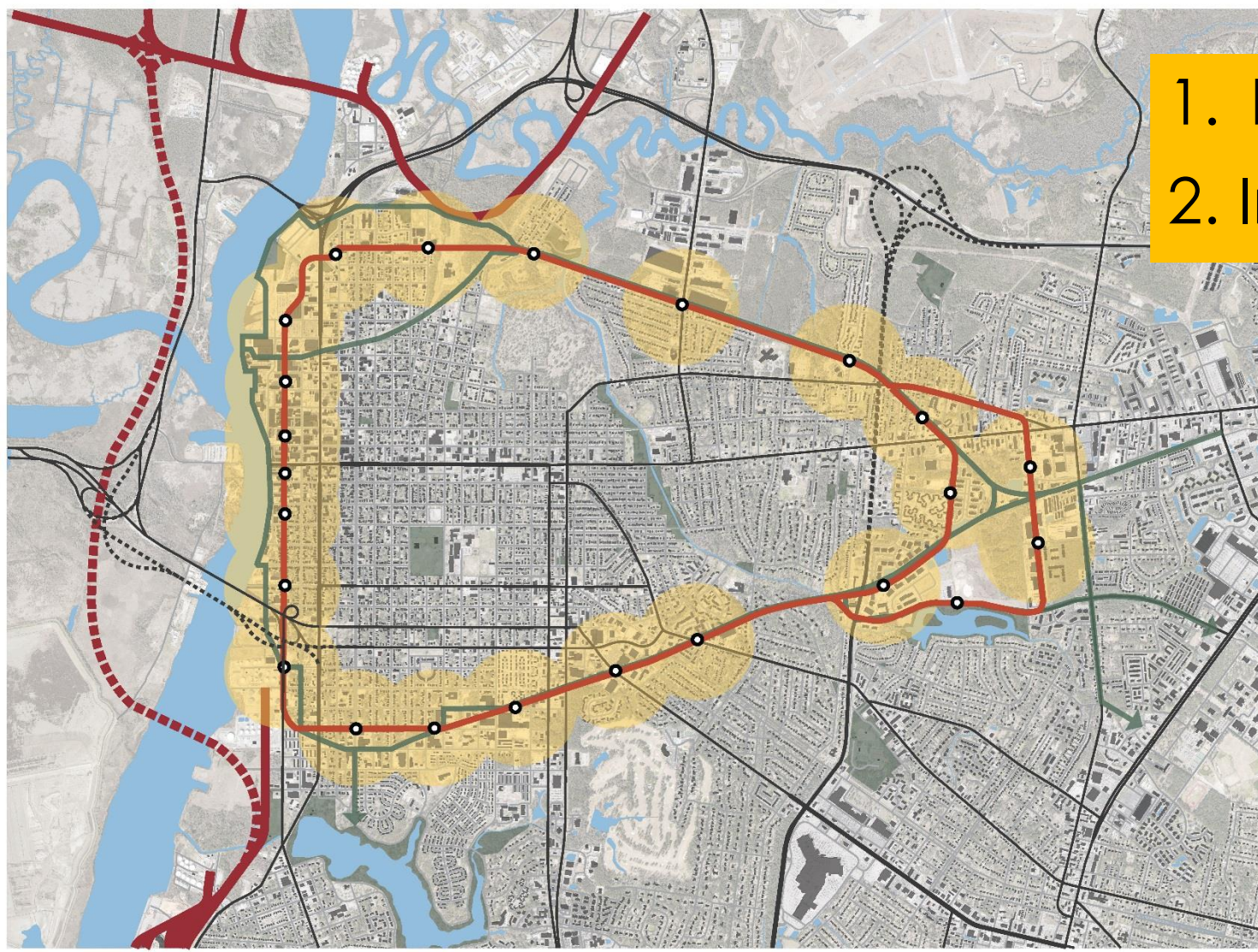


Easy as 1, 2, 3.



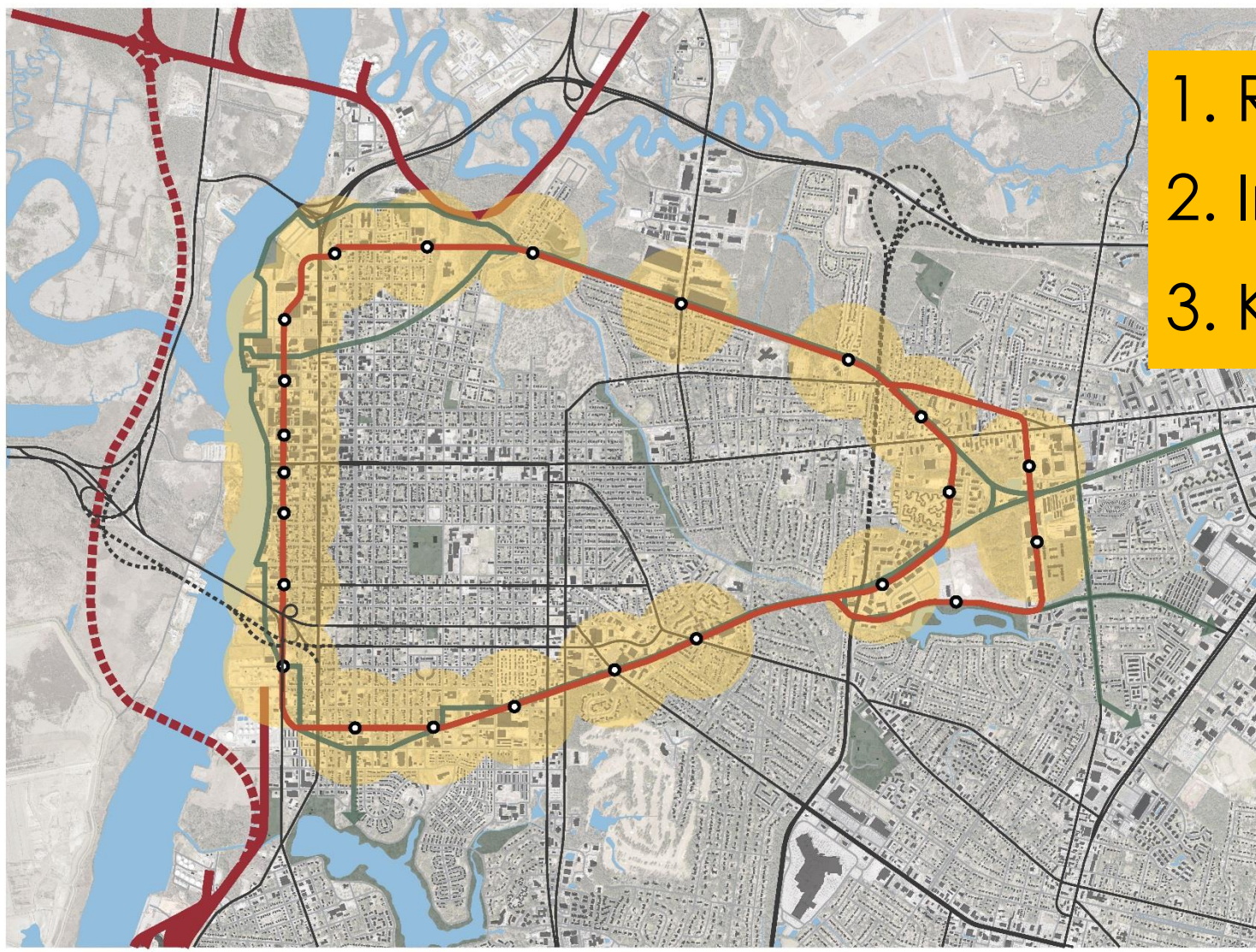
1. Relocate the Rail.

Easy as 1, 2, 3.




1. Relocate the Rail.
2. Insert the Trolley

Easy as 1, 2, 3.



1. Relocate the Rail.
2. Insert the Trolley.
3. Keep Wilmington Moving.

*Make Wilmington and
southeastern NC a 21st
century world class
destination.*



*The best time to plant a
tree is 20 years ago. The
second best time is today.*

--Ancient Proverb



Discussion/What's Next?

